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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

**INFORMATION REPORT**REPORT 

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COUNTRY USSR (Latvian SSR)

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SUBJECT Port of Ventspils

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Attached  is being forwarded as received.

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Comment: The vessels mentioned in paragraph 4 may be the  
Soviet vessels KARA and GENERAL BAGRAMYAN.

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COUNTRY USSR REPORTTOPIC Observations in Windau Harbor (Vertspils)EVALUATION            PLACE OBTAINED           

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DATE OF CONTENT           DATE OBTAINED           PREPARED 11 May 1955

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REFERENCES           PAGES 2 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)           

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REMARKS           This is UNEVALUATED Information

1. At 0900 on 22 February 1955, the observing vessel put into Windau Harbor. Thick pack-ice was met between the north and the south jetty and the ship could get through only with the assistance of an older-type icebreaker of about 800 horsepower, and between 30 and 35 meters long. The pilot boat, which left its berth in response to a flashing call, only proceeded as far as the mouth of the river between the jetty heads to meet the incoming ship. The pilot who gave his conning commands in bad English did not enter into any conversation. The observing ship moored alongside the custom house upstream from the bend of the river on the east bank. 25X1

2.            in comparison to the clearing formalities in Riga in October 1954 the inward clearing in Windau was rather casually handled. The clearing party consisted of two men only who did not insist on assembling of the crew, nor did they check the crewmembers with the pictures in the passports or search the holds or other spaces on the ship. Only cameras and binoculars had to be collected and locked up, and the binoculars were returned before the wardrobe was sealed. Tobacco, and spirits were left free. The checking took about 30 minutes and            was confined to clearing the bills of lading and the customs documents. During the ship's stay in harbor, one sentry armed with a pistol was posted at the ship and a second sentry armed with a rifle or sometimes only with a pistol, stood watch about 40 meters upstream from the ship. The two sentries wore black fur coats (with the furs inside), fur caps with the Soviet star and field boots. No service color was visible. 25X1

3. The clearing formalities finished, every crewmember received a grayish-green shore permit, size about 10 by 25 centimeters. The permit consisted of two parts, one being a counterfoil which was detached by the sentry who kept it. The text on the front page was worded exclusively in Russian, and even the names of the holders were inserted in Cyrillic letters. Instructions for conduct ashore were printed on the back in Russian and English, indicating among other things that the shore permit was valid only in connection with a passport or discharge book containing a picture of the holder and whose number was marked on the front of the shore permit, that shore leave was unlimited, but that the permit holder had to report to the pass checking office every 24 hours, and that the holder had to observe the Soviet laws while ashore to avoid inconveniences.

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4. Following a slope on the east bank of the river a concrete pier with a wooden edge was located upstream from the bend of the Windau river. This pier was estimated to be about 2.5 meters above the water surface as the inclination of the gangway seemed to indicate. The water alongside the pier was at least 6 meters deep. The concrete pier began about 200 meters upriver from the customhouse marked on the chart. Two older-type 2.5-ton electric cranes installed there were followed by four or five 5-ton motor cranes, several years old. A ten-ton luffing crane followed as a distance. It also was several years old and was no in operation while the ship was in harbor. One or two so-called 7.5 ton Stalin-type cranes (with a counterweight at the rear) were located a little south of the latter. One or two Soviet ships took on coal at the time. The SS CARA and the SS GENERAL BERGMANN were seen in the port. A ship anchored in stream 500 meters north of the bridge spanning the river took on coal from two floating cranes of about five tons lifting capacity, one each lying along side on the port and the starboard side of the respective ship. A ship moored in stream was seen there at any time; the name of the charging ships could not be identified. One railroad track ran along the concrete pier 3 to 4 meters from its edge and two other tracks on the off side. In deviation from the position indicated on the chart, the sheds were located east of the tracks, and not between the tracks. The observer believed that at least one of the tracks necessarily ran along the river in a southerly direction, as turnpikes were erected just in front of the bridge spanning the river. He could, however, only remember the turnpikes but not the tracks.
5. Two Soviet tankers were moored to dolphins a little downstream from the bridge near the slope of the east bank. The two tankers, a smaller and a larger one, of unidentified size were in ballast and had no steam up. The observer did not recollect whether pipelines or oil tanks were located in this area. The bridge rested on plain pontoons. The wooden road on the bridge, with elevated side walks on each side was not large enough to allow the passage of two vehicles at the same time. The bridge shook heavily whenever a truck was crossing it. A snow-covered slightly sloping hilly area was located opposite the berth of the observing vessel and people were observed skiing there every day.
6. On 23 February 1955 [redacted] It was pretty cold (the temperature being between 5 and 10 degrees centigrade below freezing point). [redacted] enormous number of people in the streets and [redacted] large number of soldiers (and naval personnel). The percentage of civilians and soldiers was approximately 50 : 50. [redacted] about 25X1  
 50 percent of the personnel in uniform had red black-bordered epaulets, about 10 percent black red-bordered epaulets while 40 percent were heavy personnel [redacted] estimate [redacted] rather rough. [redacted] despite the prevailing cold weather, many military soldiers wore only field coats (non-quilted one) [redacted] only a few of them went about in great coats. The members of the Soviet Navy wore blue shirt-like blouses with a waistbelt; as to headwear some of them wore flat sailor's hats while other wore visored caps or no headwear at all. No military vehicles were observed. 25X1
7. All trucks [redacted] in Windau carried distinguishing letter "X" [redacted] Most of the vehicles were old 3.5-ton trucks painted dark gray. All sedans observed were older-type vehicles in poor state of repair with the exception of one black and well-kept ZIS-sedan. An old Opel-Kadett-type sedan was observed among other cars. [redacted] the displays in the shops [redacted] rather poor. [redacted] a white shirt with blue stripes of inferior quality costing 57 rubles. A queue was assembled in front of a small wooden vendor's stall [redacted] 25X1  
 [redacted] 25X1

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